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Sir John Mc Gregor Murray  
Mc Gregors Hotel



# OBSERVATIONS,

SUGGESTED BY THE STRICTURES

OF

## THE EDINBURGH REVIEW

UPON OXFORD,

AND BY THE TWO REPLIES,

CONTAINING

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LATE CHANGES IN  
THAT UNIVERSITY.

By HENRY HOME DRUMMOND,

B. C. L. ADVOCATE.

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Βελτίον αναγκη εχει προς το κριτικό, τον ωστερ αγιδικων και  
των αμφισβητουντων λογων ακηκοστα παρτων.

ARISTOT. METAPHYS.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE Account of "The Course of Studies pursued in Oxford," which has been given by the Author of Two able Replies to the Edinburgh Review, and the important confession which he has extorted from his opponents, that their animadversions are inapplicable to the present state of that University, may, perhaps, require some apology for any farther discussion of the subject. On one point, however, I have the misfortune to differ from that Author, with regard to the views which he entertains of Lord Bacon's Writings, and the importance which he has attached to Aristotle's Logic in the system of Academical discipline; and something still appears to be wanting as to the *History* of those

improvements of which the Reviewers have shewn themselves so unaccountably ignorant. On the Constitution of the University, and some other points, I have not found it easy to speak with certainty ; and if I shall any where appear to have delivered my sentiments with too much freedom or confidence, my intention at least is less to inculcate any particular views, than to encourage, as far as I am able, the agitation of questions, from the fair discussion of which the public may derive the most important benefits ; having always before me the recommendation of the Stagrite, *μελεῖν τῆς αληθείας, μαλλον η τῆς δόξης*.

## OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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IN this age of reformation, it was not to be expected that the University of Oxford should escape her share of the obloquy which is lavished from so many quarters on all ancient institutions. Her noble buildings and rich endowments excite the envy and jealousy of her rivals, and her haughty tone of independence provokes them to indiscriminate abuse. The best friends of learning may not, indeed, wish to see her “clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day,” but the important benefits ought not to be overlooked, of removing the instructors of youth far above the necessity of flattering prevailing prejudice, and of fashioning their doctrines according to the ever-varying temper of the times. Oxford

is not, perhaps, precisely in the happy medium between the fear of want, and the indifference of ease; but while so much is said about her bigoted attachment to exploded systems and opinions, some notice might be taken of the accurate and patient habits of study which her ancient discipline encourages, and of the premature exertions, unsettled notions, and superficial, though general knowledge of more liberal and enlightened Academies. No one contends that Oxford stands in need of no reformation. She herself, in the very preamble of her recent statute, proclaims its necessity.

“ Cum vero, variis de causis, antiquus examinandi mos, per magistros necessario regentes, hisce temporibus minime accommodatus sit, decrevit haud ita pridem Academia, examinatores publicos designandos esse, et novam formam Examinationis instituendam; in quâ cum nonnulla jam agnoscimus in melius mutari posse, (usus enim fere semper aliquid apportat novi, ita ut quæ optima putaveris ea in experiundo repudies,) visum est Academiæ rem ab integro refingere.”

The candour of those writers cannot be commended, who will scarcely allow Oxford any merit at all ; who continue the unmeaning echo of the old reproaches, when their cause is in a great measure removed ; and who persist in total ignorance of all the recent improvements ; deriving their information concerning the actual state of the University from books that were written many years ago. There has, indeed, been a good deal of port and prejudice at Oxford, and in the common rooms and cloisters vestiges of both may still be occasionally traced ; though no one is any longer forced to imbibe either the one or the other. But it has been doubted whether some of the current reproaches are not a little indebted to their sound for their perpetuity, or even to certain ignoble feelings, which are occasionally confounded with laudable emulation, and disinterested love of science. Amidst the proud pretensions to every species of orthodoxy, certain observances, venerable only by the stamp of antiquity, may sometimes darken the light of knowledge ; and the place of acquirements more directly advantage-

ous may, in some few instances, be usurped by studies, which a great writer compared to “crops raised, not for the sake of the harvest, but to be ploughed in as a dressing for the land.” But, on the other hand, is it impossible to satiate the appetite for knowledge, by prematurely gratifying the curiosity by a varied, but superficial mode of instruction, which affords materials for conversation rather than for thought? and are there no dangers to be feared from plunging the untutored mind at once into the depths of metaphysics and political economy, when totally unprepared for their reception by any previous discipline; and hurrying through the whole circle of the sciences ere the maturity of reason shall be enabled to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to withhold from novelty and ingenuity the honour which is only due to useful knowledge? Is there no instance of an ingenuous mind, caught by a glittering paradox, or blinded by the benevolent professions of a favourite system, “seeking to be wise above what is written,” and falling into unphilosophical errors, or bewildered in a maze of uncertain opinions?—Is the acquisi-

tion of every species of knowledge invariably safe at all times, and under all circumstances ? Or is it not rather desirable to exercise the memory, to fix the attention, to form the taste, and, above all, to acquire habits of accurate investigation, and of industrious research, previous to the cultivation of nobler faculties of the mind ?

I am not prepared to deny that wealth is one of the many causes of indolence ; but as little should I be inclined, even if I were more sanguine of success, to attempt convincing the Oxford Fellows of the heterodox position, that the piety and munificence of their founders and benefactors has been misplaced. I leave to others, who may have more confidence in their rhetoric, the glory of procuring a general resignation of fellowships ; and without pretending to combat the truly philosophical maxim, "*ingeni largitor venter*," I shall take the liberty, once for all, to allude to a trite, but interesting topic to all who form systems for the education of youth. — A young man entering an English university is precisely at that period of life when a few

accidental impressions bestow a bias upon all his future conduct. Emancipated from the bondage of a school, his vanity is easily flattered, and a conscious pride attends the development of his faculties. If, at this most important period, mean and unpleasing ideas should once be associated with the acquisition of knowledge, it is vain for reason to demonstrate its utility. And, on the other hand, the same relative pleasure is associated with the first exertions in drinking, coachmanship, fox-hunting, and the various *physical* energies, in the minds of those whose lives are afterwards devoted to such pursuits, as attends the recollection of the scenes where genius first discovered its latent powers, or ambition first warmed the breast of the patriot. It is at this period that we form predilections that attend us to the last hour of our existence, and that we experience the luxury of those disinterested attachments which the selfish pursuits of our maturer years will not suffer to return. "Cette amitié parfaite, dont on n'est capable que dans la jeunesse, avant qu'on ait connu le sentiment de la rivalité, avant

que les carrières irrevocablement tracées sillonnent et partagent le champ de l'avenir."—It is at the same period that we form those deep-rooted antipathies that attend us through all the business of life. But why should I enlarge upon so obvious a topic, as the importance of associating in the tender mind whatever is pleasing, and dignified, and honourable, not only with proficiency in literature and science, but even with the scenes where such pursuits are wont to occupy the thoughts? Human nature itself proclaims the ignorance of those who would separate the pomp of learning from its power.

On no occasion, perhaps, do the generality of men form an opinion altogether unbiassed by some passion or prejudice, or which is not more or less influenced by some external and adventitious circumstance. This may, and ought to mortify the pride of human understanding; but such is the law of our nature; and a wise man will not attempt to set our instincts and our speculations at variance. The most enlightened minds should feel the operation of the

same principle which arrested the savage Gauls in the career of conquest, when they gazed with silent admiration on the majestic appearance of the Roman senators : For our desires and affections are as much a part of our constitution as our reason ; nor would this alone teach us to preserve our life, and far less to provide for our future happiness. “ *Et fulmina ipsa non tam nos confunderent, si vis eorum tantum, non etiam ipse fulgor timeretur.* ”\* With these truths before our eyes, the application of which to the present purpose, it would lead into too wide a field to illustrate, we may safely leave to the “ shallow, petulant, and short-sighted coxcombs of philosophy,” their old employment of holding up to ridicule every established custom and ancient institution, of which they cannot calculate the direct utility ; and while we are satisfied with this conviction, that the feelings, and even the prejudices of the human heart may accomplish noble and useful purposes, rather endeavour to see both the errors and merits of

\* *Quinct. Inst. VIII. 3.*

contending systems and opinions, than to venture upon any positive decision.

Previous to the year 1800, a stranger could discover no vestige of public education in the University of Oxford, except some antiquated and useless ceremonies. The exercises of polemical divinity and scholastic logic, which had engrossed the attention of preceding ages, had, by their universally acknowledged inutility, dwindled into forms ; and even their names were no longer understood by those who performed them. The business of education was entirely carried on within the walls of the different colleges, in various modes, and with various degrees of success. Those who had no leisure or opportunity to investigate the proceedings of these societies, or who found a difficulty in reconciling such a system to their ideas of a university, were apt hastily to conclude that there was nothing but total idleness at Oxford. They heard the names of professors who never lectured ; and they saw before them the ruins of a great system of public discipline, which, ages before, had rendered the

name of Oxford famous over all the literary world. But they did not perceive that every college was now become a university, and every college tutor a professor. They inveighed against the public professors for converting their offices into sinecures, without considering that under-graduates could not learn from them what they were obliged to learn from the tutors of their respective colleges, and what, even if they had their choice, they could not learn so well : For, however splendid a spectacle it may be, to see hundreds of young men crowded together in a lecture-room, catching every word that is uttered from the chair, as if it were an oracle, and carrying off volumes of notes, far exceeding in size the manuscripts of the professor, I have always doubted whether the instruction that is thus collected be not more specious than solid. The utility of this mode of instruction several centuries ago was manifest, when there were scarcely any books, and knowledge was confined to a few ; but I should be glad to know, wherever the practice prevails at the present day, how many of those volumes

of notes already alluded to are ever studied after they are written ; and if they were, how great a proportion of what they contain might not be found much better told in a hundred books ; and how much of what is new is mis-stated and unintelligible. " People," says Dr Johnson, " have now-a-days got a strange idea that every thing is to be taught by lectures ; now I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except where experiments are to be shewn. You may teach chemistry by lectures ;—you may teach making of shoes by lectures." Now, although this opinion is not to be understood as denying all advantages to oral over written instruction, yet, upon the whole, there is much sound sense in the learned Doctor's remark. Knowledge is now too generally diffused in books, to leave much to be learned at a university, which may not be learned elsewhere. The great advantage of an academical education arises chiefly from the love of learning which is inspired by the genius of the place,—from the

collision of many minds,—from the ardour which hope of distinction kindles,—and from the advice and assistance in the use of books which young men derive from those of more experience than themselves. The knowledge that is actually gained is less to be considered, than the foundation that is laid for future improvement. The habits that are acquired, the associations that are formed, the bias and turn of mind, are of infinitely more importance than a superficial smattering of the various arts and sciences. The latter may sometimes be more directly and immediately useful in the business of life, but it is from the former only that any real and solid advantage can ever be derived. The one is the seed scattered on the surface of the earth, which quickly springs up and ripens, but is withered and gone before the harvest; the other is the slow, though certain produce, which rewards the labour of the husbandman.

“ Hi sunt, qui parva facile faciunt: et audacia  
 “ provecti, quidquid illic possunt, statim ostendunt. Possunt autem id demum, quod in  
 “ proximo est: verba continuant; hæc vultu

“ *interrito nulla tardati verecundia, proferunt :*  
 “ *non multum præstant, sed cito : non subest*  
 “ *vera vis, nec penitus immissis radicibus niti-*  
 “ *tur : ut quæ summo solo sparsa sunt semina,*  
 “ *celerius se effundunt : et imitæ spicas herbu-*  
 “ *læ in anibus aristis ante messem flavescent.*”\*

As to discoveries in science, they are quite foreign from the instruction of youth. If they are not completely ascertained, they tend only to mislead ; and as it is at best but the elements of knowledge that can be taught, it is of importance to teach, in the first place, those old and established principles that are beyond the reach of controversy ; and, with regard to more modern improvements, rather to be satisfied with pointing out the best mode of study, than to attempt, in the short period of academical residence, to convey a few slight and superficial outlines of the whole mass of useful knowledge which learning and genius have accumulated in the revolution of ages. Thus it is that the most ingenuous man is frequently the worst

\* Quint. Instit. Lib. I.

tutor or professor. Besides, it is obvious that a lecture, delivered to a popular assembly of several hundred persons, cannot be adapted to the capacities of the whole. The professor cannot, like the tutor of a college, know the previous habits and various acquirements of his pupils, and separate them into small classes accordingly, where he can stop to explain every difficulty as it occurs. In a public lecture, the instruction conveyed may be of great service to those who have made some progress in their studies ; but if the subject be new to them, and, still more, if they either trust to it altogether for information, or at best content themselves with hastily referring to the books of which they learn the names and characters from the professor, their knowledge may be extensive, but it must be superficial, their principles ill founded, their deductions rash, and all their habits of thinking unsound. The desultory acquisition of general knowledge may suit some great geniuses, who catch the truth, as it were, by intuition, and can snatch, at one glance, all that is useful and important in the accumulated wis-

dom of past ages ; but the evils that arise to the ordinary herd of men from a precocious system of education are serious and alarming.

—These hints were written before the appearance of the First Reply to the Edinburgh Review ; and what the author of that pamphlet has thrown out on this subject seems to preclude the necessity of their enlargement, and of any farther illustration of the advantages which the System of College Lectures possesses over the more ancient and imposing solemnity of a Professor speaking in public to a whole University. On the whole, it is natural that each mode of instruction should have its admirers, where each may be defended on such excellent grounds ; nor is it of much importance to settle the preference, while impartial men must admit the conclusion, that “ the best method would be that “ which should unite both more completely “ than is the case with any modern universi- “ ty.” \* I shall only observe farther, that in what has been said concerning public lectures,

their advantage to the chosen few is not denied, especially when united with the adventitious circumstances of an exhibition of experiments, or display of eloquence ; but the inclination of the pupils to learn is taken for granted, since it is obvious that in this mode of instruction neither authority nor emulation can operate. \*

\* In the College of King James the Sixth, which alone constitutes the University of Edinburgh, boys matriculate so young, that at the end of the two first years, which are devoted to Greek and Latin, they in general know very little of the former, and a great deal less of the latter, than when they left school. This system undoubtedly tends to destroy the patient and industrious habits previously acquired, and to encourage a superficial and inaccurate mode of study, which is very observable in their future progress. I allude to the system only, and not to those whose duty it is to enforce it ; for the very exertions I have witnessed serve but to strengthen my conviction of the incalculable advantage of continuing the discipline of a school for two years longer. In consequence of the comparatively small number who attend the Mathematical lectures, and the necessity of teaching this branch by examining the students, the mode of proceeding in this instance very much resembles a College lecture, and shews the prevailing sentiment, that mathematics cannot be well taught to a crowd, since those young men who do not attend the mathematical lectures in the Universi-

Even Mr Knox himself, a member of the University, has contributed much to mislead the public, by writing pages after pages to expose the folly of the obsolete institutions, on

ty are instructed by other persons, in different parts of the town, who teach precisely in the same manner. The other professors have no mode of being acquainted with the proficiency of their pupils, or even (in consequence of their numbers) with the regularity of their attendance ; nor do the lectures differ at all from any other public exhibition, excepting that the rule of not disturbing the audience is in general enforced by the professor.

In this University there is nothing corresponding to the Oxford idea of a College. The public professors and their lectures are every thing. None of the young men lodge in the College, or are subject to any discipline, or wear any distinctive dress, or enjoy any emolument, with the exception of a few trifling exhibitions, or bursaries, as they are called, none of them exceeding L. 15 a-year, chiefly payable to students attending the Lectures on Divinity. As to University honours, the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and of Law are unknown. For that of Master of Arts there used formerly to be an annual examination, but the rules drawn up for that solemnity by the late Principal now serve no other purpose than to adorn the walls of the Library ; and the degree itself is seldom claimed, and never refused to any one who has attended the lectures. The degree of Doctor in Divinity is usually conferred on the most respectable and dis-

which it was not worth while to have written a single sentence, as no one attempted to defend them ; and by expressing himself so carelessly and ambiguously about what the Colleges had substituted in their room ; and allowing repeated editions of his popular but superficial works to meet the public eye, without adding a syllable concerning the successive improvements of Academical discipline. His narrow and illiberal views of education are sufficiently developed in

tinguished clergymen of the Presbyterian Church ; and that of Doctor of *Laws*, as it is still termed, is a literary honour reserved for laymen ;—both of them purely honorary. The degree of Doctor of Medicine is the reward of success in a strict private examination by the Medical professors, and of three years attendance on their lectures, or rather of the payment of three years fees ; the only mode, in a numerous class, of ascertaining the fact ; and is an honour for the purity of which the University deserve the highest praise. No corporate privileges attach to any of these degrees ; nor is it necessary even to matriculate in order to obtain them. The *Senatus Academicus*, consisting of all the Professors, to the number of twenty-eight, and a Principal, is the only Academical Meeting.—Upon the celebrity of a University which forms so complete a contrast to the wealthy foundations of Oxford, without funds, or patronage, or discipline, it is unnecessary to enlarge.

the plan for reforming the University, suggested in the Letter to Lord North. Upon the scheme of improvement which that Letter contains, I have only one remark to offer,—that Mr Knox's scheme of improvement is strongly marked by the prejudices of his professional habits ; and that its adoption would make the University a school. Now, if I were to hazard an opinion, it would be, that it is in some instances too much of a school already ; that young men will never be driven to literary eminence by the fear of punishment, or deterred from idleness by sumptuary laws ; and that it is of no avail for the legislators of the University to multiply prohibitions, and nominate proctors to enforce them, if they do not succeed in inspiring the youth committed to their charge with such an interest in the business of education as may render these restraints unnecessary. “ Let them be encouraged,” says Dr Tatham, “ by kind and benevolent assistance ; “ let them be led on by honest emulation, “ which is a way to learning a thousand times

“ more successful than the rod of awe.” Boys may be forced to exert their memory, but can men ever be forced to think? Or will an oppressive inquisition into the minutest parts of a student’s conduct call into exertion any of his mental powers? Young men will learn nothing to purpose, which they do not learn with good will, and from a conviction of its utility.

Nothing can be spoken with too much contempt of the absurd and ludicrous remains of the ancient discipline, which would not have so long disgraced the schools of Oxford, if the nature and constitution of the University had not been adverse to every change. But while the troublesome forms of the scholastic disputation provoked the indignation of a liberal age, the meritorious exertions of those individuals were too apt to be forgotten, who laboured so successfully in their own societies to supply the place of a system common to the whole. I do not mean that it was possible, by all that single colleges, acting without concert, could effect, to have produced so many of the advantages of

public education as might have proceeded from the united efforts of the whole. I am only at variance with those who will not allow that there was any thing done in any of the Colleges, because there was nothing done by the University, or by some one College with which they happened to be best acquainted.—The following observations relate to what is done by the University at large, over and above the various important branches of instruction carried on by individual Colleges.

In the year 1800 a statute was passed in Convocation *De Examinandis Graduum Candidatis*, by which every candidate for the lowest Academical degrees was subjected to a public examination in the rudiments of religion, in at least three classical authors, of which two might be Greek, or two Latin, and in the Elements of Mathematics and Physics, Logic, Ethicks, and Rhetoric. The candidate was also obliged to shew “quâ polleat facultate animi sui sensa “linguâ Latinâ explicandi.” The Examiners had the power of dispensing with certain of

these branches, (the classical authors, and the rudiments of religion, however, always excepted;) but when this power was exercised, the examination was more severe in the rest. Of six Examiners, three made a quorum, and three annually went out of office. They examined six candidates in a day; and the examinations generally lasted about five hours.—I am not merely quoting the words, but stating the operation of the law; and I can confidently assert, that the officers appointed by the University to carry it into effect, most anxiously and conscientiously discharged their duty, during the six years that it remained in force. It frequently happened, so strictly was their duty interpreted, that several of the candidates were refused a certificate; and even instances were not unusual where a second attempt proved unsuccessful.

In this statute a provision was made for two classes of candidates, the first of which was limited to twelve in a year, who should be particularly distinguished in the examinations. But, instead of allowing the Examiners to select

these classes from the whole number examined, the statute appointed the candidates for *honours*, as they were usually termed, to come forward in a particular manner, not unlike challenging the whole University to a trial of strength, and subjecting themselves, in case of failure, to signal disgrace. This, joined to the singular error of admitting none into the second class till the first class was filled, was soon found to operate as a great discouragement to emulation.

Obvious as these defects in the statute were, it was not till the year 1806 that any attempt was made to rectify them. The statutes are enacted by the House of Convocation, or body corporate at large, consisting of all the Doctors and Masters of Arts. The heads of Colleges and Halls form also a separate body, possessed of peculiar and important powers and privileges, which the other members of convocation do not enjoy ; and their opinions and interests are sometimes at variance : but, like the Peers and Commons in the ancient parliament of Scotland, in their legislative capacity they deliberate

rate and vote together. Fortunate would it be for Oxford if this were the whole of the resemblance, and if the Lords of the Articles were not forcibly recalled to our recollection, by the encroachments of the Heads of Houses upon the powers of this venerable Assembly, which have reduced their functions to a simple negative upon the questions proposed by the Vice-Chancellor from the chair. Their power must have been originally derived from the Convocation, and they were probably intended as a committee to transact such business as did not require its immediate superintendence. How it has come to pass, it may not be easy to trace, but it seems now established in practice, that no statute can be proposed that does not originate with the Heads of Houses, and receive their previous sanction; and every attempt to make the smallest alteration or amendment on their measures is invariably resisted with success. Thus it is, that instead of every member of the legislative body having the means of proposing what he thinks best calculated to promote the

honour and interest of the University, and of obtaining a free discussion for every grievance and for every improvement, the only power reserved to them is that of preventing rash and pernicious innovations; an office which all who are acquainted with the prudent caution with which the Heads of Houses are accustomed to oppose the current of popular opinion, will readily believe requires no very arduous exertions. The statute, as previously prepared, is proposed from the Chair, and must be passed or rejected *in toto*. From this it follows, that a good measure may be lost for some trifling objection, or a bad one may be carried into effect, because it is better than none.

To this defect in the constitution of the University the delay in amending the obvious errors of the statute of 1800 was in a great measure owing. Greater alterations were called for than the Heads of Houses were willing to concede; and an expected opposition, powerful both in numbers and in eloquence, which they could neither satisfy nor resist, confined their delibe-

rations for six years within the walls of that mysterious conclave, known to the younger members of the University by the profane appellation of *Golgotha*. In the end of the year 1806, the public attention was at length directed to a new statute, amending that passed in 1800. At this time appeared the first of a series of addresses to the Members of Convocation from the Rector of Lincoln College, which, along with some bad taste and extravagance, contained many important truths. Dr Tatham is a strenuous advocate for the freedom and independence of Convocation, and labours to animate that body to a sense of their own importance; calling loudly for "one grand Academical Act," to abolish all that is useless in the ancient system, and substitute in its room the improvements of a liberal and enlightened age. In truth, there must be admitted to be some justice in the remark, that there is a tendency in all corporations to a species of "corporate pride and vanity,"\* which is sometimes hostile to a spirit of improvement. The possession of great corpo-

\* *Edin. Rev. of Barry's Works.*

rate privileges is, perhaps, of more advantage in protecting the infancy of learning, and preserving alive its spirit in dark ages, than when it is generally diffused. Thus it was that the Heads of Houses resisted every alteration of the existing law, till the general dissatisfaction with some parts of it became so strong, that they were obliged to expose themselves to the disgrace of a failure, in the proposal of something new. The amended statute was proposed and rejected, the first time in 1806, and a second time, though again amended, in February, 1807. In order the better to ascertain the objectionable passages, the third time the statute was proposed, it was agreed that it should be divided into portions, and that a vote should pass upon every one of these, notwithstanding the rule, that the whole is lost by the rejection of a part. One only was negatived, that, viz. which contained a provision for publishing the names of the lowest class of candidates. This was accordingly altered, and the statute again proposed and passed, in Convocation, on the 17th June, 1807.

In this statute, as finally passed, the objectionable system of *Honours*, already alluded to, was removed, and in its stead the simple and natural mode of classing the whole candidates according to merit, and publishing the names of the two first classes, both in literature and in mathematics, at the end of each half-yearly examination, was introduced. The number of Examiners was reduced from six to four; two annually going out of office, and being declared incapable of re-election without the interval of one year; and their emoluments were increased from L. 50 to L. 80 a-year; a trifling recompence, after all, for the most laborious and important office in the University. In the subjects of examination there is little alteration. “Instituatur igitur examen in Rudimentis Religionis, in Literis Humanioribus, et in Mathematicarum Scientiarum, et Physices Elementis.” “Literæ Humaniores” are explained to mean, not only the Greek and Latin languages, but also Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy, “quatenus a scriptoribus veteribus derivandæ sint.” “Dialecticam itidem,” says

the statute, “ hisce literis adnumeramus.” Now, as to the *Dialectica*, it may be allowed to exhibit the singular example of an art brought to perfection in the same age in which it was invented; for however it may have been reformed by omissions, its fondest admirers do not boast of the additions it has received since the days of Aristotle; but I cannot conceal my great regret and astonishment, that this learned University should discard every modern acquisition in moral philosophy. The works of Aristotle and Cicero on this subject were wonderful productions for the age in which they wrote, and are still highly interesting and instructive; nor can any thing be less desirable than their exclusion from this examination. But Dr Tatham’s accusation, of a bigoted attachment to antiquity in the framers of the statute, seems in this instance well founded, and the question highly deserving of attention, to which that reverend gentleman has so often in vain required an answer, Whether, in their opinion, there has been no improvement in Moral Philosophy since the days of Aristotle? Every

scholar must be anxious to see the invaluable remains of ancient genius and learning assiduously cultivated, not only as models of taste, but for the important matter they contain. It is only against the *exclusive* study of the ancient moralists that any objection occurs; nor can a satisfactory apology be conceived for thus rejecting with scorn all that the efforts of human reason, assisted by divine revelation, have produced upon this most important of all the sciences, during the lapse of nearly two thousand years. The narrow policy of attempting to conceal from the eyes of under-graduates the arguments for any system of opinions, is now, I trust, utterly extinct; and the orthodoxy of an Oxford scholar no longer thought the less secure, that he can give *a reason of the faith that is in him*. The University will not surely reply with the Caliph, that if the books be conformable to the Koran, they are useless, and if they be contrary to it, they are detestable.

Equally well founded is the Rector of Lincoln's attack upon that *Dialectica*, on which, and its admirers, he bestows so many singular

epithets. I cannot, however, apprehend the same unfortunate consequences which he forebodes from the melancholy clause, "Modo ut "dialectice semper ratio habeatur," which restrains the dispensing power of the Examinators in the only other instance beside that of the Christian religion ; being firmly convinced that not all the statutes, nor all the Doctors, and both the Proctors, will ever revive the fame of this antiquated discipline. A law positively absurd is generally eluded. It is the negative absurdity, the defects of the statute, of which I am most afraid. Let them but enact that the modern authors on Moral Philosophy *may* be a subject of examination, and I shall not objett if they add, that the *Dialectica must*. They must be themselves aware, that even at present, recent as the enactment is, the few days which the candidates find it necessary to devote to the consideration of some wretched outlines of the once stupendous fabric of Scholastic Logic, do not exceed the gratification of a laudable curiosity concerning a tale of other times.

This I apprehend to be the best defence

against the charge, that “ at Oxford the dictates of Aristotle are still listened to as infallible de-“ crees,” \* though I am aware that it is not likely to be popular. This charge is now explained as particularly alluding to the Logic and Metaphysics ; but as far as the books called *The Metaphysics* are concerned, it must be admitted to be quite unfounded, that work being unknown in the schools. This must, however, have been discovered, from the circumstance, that no notice was taken of it among the subjects of examination ennumerated in the First Reply, already referred to ; and indeed it is not likely that any person at all acquainted with *the Books that come after the Physics*, which are in a great measure but a continuation of the latter, should suppose them to be much attended to where the Physics are obsolete. The author must, therefore, be understood to mean such metaphysical doctrines as are contained in the Ethics and Rhētoric ; and though the positive evil here does not seem to deserve so serious a

\* Edinburgh Review, No. 22.

charge, as far as the exclusion of all other metaphysics from the schools is implied, I have no defence to offer. The most irresistible reasons may indeed be given, why the ancient treatises on Rhetoric and Ethics should continue, as at present, to occupy a great portion of the candidate's attention.\* Their unrivalled excellence in cultivating habits of accurate and patient investigation would alone induce me to view any alteration in the present practice with the greatest regret. But why should not such candidates as chuse to do so be allowed to show their knowledge of modern authors also? In Ethics and Rhetoric, Aristotle will not easily be superseded with advantage, as the foundation of every future acquirement; but there is this error, I fear, in the Oxford system, that it points to no mode of raising the superstructure. Every one must invent and discover for himself; but at the close of an academical course he should find himself on the right road, else the provisions which he has with so much

\* First Reply, pages 26, 140, and 180,

pains stored up for the journey will gradually moulder away, while he continues, in the expressive language of Bacon, to gaze at Philosophy and the Sciences, as if they were statues.\* Now, whatever be the merit of Aristotle, it must be admitted, that of Induction there is nothing to be found in his writings; and if this be indeed the only road to useful discovery, until Bacon and his commentators shall share with the Stagirite the honours of the *Schola Metaphysics*, the melancholy reflection must present itself, that the valuable habits acquired at Oxford are in a great measure lost to their possessors, from ignorance of the important ends to which they are destined.

Upon this head I am called upon, in consistence with the principle which I had before me when I selected the motto prefixed to these remarks, to take some notice of the errors into which the author of the Two Replies has fallen with respect to the nature of the *Novum Organum*. Notwithstanding my high respect for

\* *Instaur. Mag. Praefat.*

that author's talents, and my approbation of his sentiments on other subjects, I must take leave to express my humble apprehension that he has misconceived the scope of that philosophy, to which, in the opinion of the ablest judges, the world is not less indebted in intellectual than in physical science. The strongest confutation of his assertion, that "the *Novum Organum* is confined to the department of Physical Science," will probably appear, to those who are best acquainted with Bacon's writings, to consist in that general tendency of the whole work, which is so easily collected, for one's own satisfaction, from a careful study and comparison of all its bearings, but of which every one must find it so difficult to convey to others any adequate notion, who feels his own powers unequal to the task of entering, in some measure, into the mind of that wonderful man. Invaluable as his labours must ever be esteemed in the history of science, he seems, after all, to have but very partially developed the magnitude and importance of his general views. His principal object appears to have been, to point out the road of useful

inquiry, in opposition to the vain jargon of the schools, and to substitute the Inductive method of reasoning for the Logic of Aristotle. He does not go so far as to pronounce the *Dialectica* absolutely useless. He admits that it may be of advantage in strengthening the mind, as wrestling in strengthening the body, and may, on various occasions, especially in what he terms “artes populares et opinabiles,” be a convenient instrument in the use of knowledge previously acquired; but he distinctly denies that it can ever be of the smallest service in the discovery of useful knowledge; and as the best mode of investigating truth is his object, he totally discards it, as foreign from his purpose.— This view of the subject is clearly established in the *Distributio Operis*, and the preface to the *Novum Organum*; and the conclusion is this: “Quod si cui mortalium cordi et curæ sit, non tantum inventis hærere, atque iis uti, sed ad ulteriora penetrare; atque non disputando adversarium, sed opere naturam vincere; de nique non belle et probaliter opinari, sed certo et ostensive scire; tales, tanquam veri scien-

“ tiarum filii, nobis (si videbitur) se adjungant ;  
 “ ut omissis naturæ atriis quæ infiniti contri-  
 “ verunt, aditus aliquando ad interiora pate-  
 “ fiat.”

The author of the Replies quotes a passage from the second Book of the Advancement of Learning,\* in which Lord Bacon admits, that “ in the sciences popular the form of syllogism “ may have use ;” but when he draws the conclusion, that the object of Bacon’s reasoning here and elsewhere, is to show, “ that *discoveries* in “ *Natural Philosophy* are not like-“ ly to be promoted by this engine,” this con-  
 clusion is indeed the truth, but not the whole truth : for there is not, as far as I can re-  
 collect, a passage in Bacon’s writings to sanc-  
 tion the implication, that a *discovery of any sort* was ever made by syllogisms. In the passage to which he more particularly refers, he him-  
 self quotes the limitation, “ *Quæ assensum pa-  
 rit, operis effæta est.*” Lord Bacon, he says,  
 “ observes that Logic does not help towards the  
 “ invention of Arts and Sciences, but only of

\* Second Reply, p. 26.

“ Arguments.” With regard to the latter, I beg leave to quote farther, from the same passage, the following words, which so strongly show Lord Bacon’s anxiety to obviate the idea that *any discovery* could be made by the Logic of the Schools. “ The invention of speech or argument is not properly an invention ; for to invent is to discover that we know not, and not to recover or resummon that which wee alreadie knowe ; and the use of this invention is no other ; but out of the knowledge whereof of our minde is alreadie posset, to drawe foorth, or call before us, that which may bee pertinent to the purpose, which wee take into our consideration. So as to speake truly, it is no invention ; but a remembrance or suggestion, with an application : which is the cause why the schooles doe place it after judgement, as subsequent, and not precedent. Nevertheless, because wee doe account it a chase, as well of deere in an inclosed parke, as in a forrest at large ; and that it hath alreadie obtayned the name : Let it be called Invention ; so as it be perceyved and dis-

“ cerned that the scope and end of this invention, is readynesse and present use of our knowledge, and not addition or amplification thereof.”

As to this strange assertion, that the *Novum Organum* has nothing to do with the science of mind, instead of attempting a general exposition of Bacon's views, or of referring to the opinions of his ablest commentators, I shall content myself with contrasting a single extract with the first statement of this extraordinary position.

“ His first Book (of the *Novum Organum*) is occupied with a consideration of the causes which have retarded the progress of Natural Philosophy; and his second Book contains a specimen of the new method of investigation which he proposes, in order to further discoveries in that department.—To this province of Natural Philosophy is the whole Treatise exclu-

“ Etiam dubitabit quispiam potius quam objiciet; utrum nos de Naturali tantum Philosophia, an etiam de Scientiis reliquis, Logicis, Ethicis, Politicis, secundum viam nostram perficiendis loquamur. At nos certe de universis haec, quae dicta sunt, intelligimus: Atque quemadmodum vulgaris Logica, quae regit res per Syllogismum, non tantum ad Naturales, sed ad

“sively confined.”—Second Reply, p. 19.

“omnes scientias pertinet ;  
“ita et nostra, quæ procedit  
“per Inductionem, omnia com-  
“plectitur,” &c.—Aph. 127.,  
lib. I.

The second book, “which,” he repeats, “is strictly confined to the subject of *Natural Philosophy*,”\* is indeed, in great part, occupied with physical illustrations. But, in the very midst of these, examples of a purely intellectual sort occur, as the long aphorism concerning memory ; and the reference which the former bear to the human mind, together with their introduction merely as forming a part of the new Logic, is continually inculcated. In the concluding aphorism Bacon gives this reason for the number of physical examples, which, if the incomplete nature of the work be taken into view, must appear completely satisfactory : “*Illud vero monendum, nos in hoc nostro Or-  
“gano,*” (in opposition to that of Aristotle) “*tractare Logicam, non Philosophiam.* Sed

\* Page 21.

" cum Logica nostra, doceat intellectum et eru-  
 " diat ad hoc, ut non tenuibus mentis quasi  
 " claviculis, rerum abstracta captet et prenset,  
 " (ut Logica vulgaris;) sed naturam revera  
 " persecet, et corporum virtutes et actus, eo-  
 " rumque leges in materiâ determinatas inveni-  
 " at; ita ut non solum ex naturâ mentis, sed  
 " ex naturâ rerum quoque hæc scientia ema-  
 " net; mirum non est, si ubique naturalibus  
 " contemplationibus et experimentis, ad exem-  
 " pla artis nostræ conspersa fuerit et illustrata."

The author then proceeds to enumerate " the hasty assumption of *Physical* principles," as one of the injurious effects which Bacon notices of Aristotle's works. But upon a reference to Aphorisms 67 and 125, his authorities for this position, they will be found to be expressed in such general terms, as to be utterly irreconcileable to this imputed restriction to Physics. Philosophia, Philosophiæ, meditationum principia, veritas, &c., absolutely taken, can never signify Physics; and if considered with reference to Bacon's explanation of his meaning, when generally expressed, (as already quoted from the

next aphorism but one, and in various other places,) and still more, with reference to the scope of the whole work, this limitation of Bacon's charge against the old Logic to *Physical principles* must appear at least as "hasty an assumption" as any that was ever charged against its master Aristotle.

"The whole of this latter aphorism," the author continues, "is well worthy of attention, "if any one would convince himself how entirely false the current notion is, that Bacon "invented the method of Induction for arriving at those truths which Aristotle sought by means of Syllogism. In this aphorism it is distinctly declared, that the method of acquiring first principles adopted by each is in kind the same."\* Now, if any one thing be more certain than another, it is this, that Bacon did intend to substitute the mode of Induction for that of Syllogism, in the discovery of *every* species of truth; and, fortunately for science, his intentions have been well understood by his

\* Page 20.

successors. Accordingly I must confess myself unable to detect in this aphorism any thing inconsistent with the uniform tenour of his writings. It is intended to anticipate the objection, that he is only doing over again what the ancients did before him ; which objection he thinks it unnecessary, after what he has already said, to answer at length ; and after alluding to those passages where he has more fully explained his meaning, he observes, that the ancients rushed at once from certain examples and particulars to the most general conclusions, and thus were obliged to reduce to their rules, by subtle distinctions and explanations, the new facts which occurred, or to remove them in a slovenly manner by exceptions ; and even when the facts themselves did not disagree with those conclusions, their causes, at least, were not to be accommodated without much labour and pertinacity. He concludes, “ *Verum nec Historia* “ *Naturalis et Experientia illa erat, quam fuisse* “ *oportebat ; (longe certe abest) et ista adyolatio* “ *tio ad generalissima, omnia perdidit.* ”

If it did not occupy too much space to follow Bacon's own advice, and, going back upon his work, use one part of it as a commentary upon another, such a mode of proceeding would exhibit in the strongest light the unity and consistence of the great plan which he meditated, and the constant impression of the same general views upon his mind. But, in truth, I despair of success, if the references already made be insufficient to show that he intended the method of Induction for the discovery of every species of truth, and that, as he conceived Syllogism to be unfit for discoveries of any sort, wherever the application of the latter to such a purpose had been attempted, the former should take its place. "Itaque," says he in the preface, "Ars illa Dialecticæ, sero (ut diximus) cœvens, neque rem ullo modo restituens, ad errores potius figendos, quam ad veritatem apere riendam valuit. Restat unica salus, ac sanitas, ut opus mentis universum de integro resumatur," &c. Such, among innumerable other passages, is the tenour of that part of the

Distributio Operis where he assigns his reasons for rejecting Syllogism, but which is too long for insertion here. It is followed by an excellent commentary on the aphorism now under consideration,\* which commences with the observation, that, according to his mode, the order of demonstration is *completely inverted*. Bacon undoubtedly admits, in this aphorism, that the ancients were in possession of useful knowledge; and as Induction is the only mode of discovering truth, it must have been obtained in this manner. But they soon stopped short, and imitating the example of the architect, (the illustration is admirably correct,) who removes the scaffolding out of sight by which the building was raised, they deprived themselves of the means of adding the smallest improvement. No one ever asserted that no example of Induction occurs in the writings of Aristotle, or claimed to Bacon the merit of its invention. It is impossible to advance a single step without it, even in the intercourse of life. Accordingly,

\* Aph. 125.

when I said above, that in Aristotle's writings there is nothing of Induction, I only meant to contend, that he no where treats of it, or recommends its adoption, and that he was as ignorant of its philosophical application as the unlettered savage is of the law of gravitation, who nevertheless makes that law subservient to his daily wants, by the very same process which afterwards led to its discovery. On the other hand, the merit of Bacon's philosophy consists in the systematical application of the only mode of useful investigation, from which the attention of his predecessors had been distracted by the prevailing influence of the Syllogistic form of reasoning.

It is observed in the Second Reply, that "Induction was neither unknown nor disregarded by Aristotle;"\* and Doctor Gillies is quoted in confirmation of this remark. But, omitting all notice of the circumstance, that Aristotle only mentions the *maryam* in a very cursory manner in one or two passages, not

withstanding Dr Gillies's "learning and fidelity," I am not convinced that this *παραγωγη* has much resemblance to the Baconian Induction. The word is derived from *παραγω, infero*, and, as far as I understand it, would be much more correctly rendered *Inference* or *Deduction*. Constantine defines it, "Argumentatio, quæ ex concessis schemi laqueos textit ad interrogandum" "cum qui semel se interrogandum præbuit;" which certainly is not very promising for the discovery of truth. Quintilian says, "Est argumentorum locus ex similibus; si conten-  
"tia virtus, utique et abtementia: Si fidem de-  
"bet tutor, et procurator. Hoc est ex eo ge-  
"nere quod *παραγωγη* Graeci vocant, Cicero in-  
"ductionem."\* And in the next chapter, "Illa  
"argumentatio quæ plurimum Socrates est usus,  
"hanc habuit viam; cum plura interrogasset,  
"quæ fateri adversario necesse esset, novissime  
"id, de quo quærebatur, *inferebat*, cui simile  
"concessisset. Id est *inductio*." One of the  
authorities produced by Suidas seems anxious

\* Lib. V. c. 10.

to make a difference of opinion upon the meaning of this word, but I suspect, upon investigation, the distinction would not appear of much importance. The author of the Replies may himself determine, whether, upon the most favourable construction, it resembles more the process of reasoning which discovered the law of gravitation, or that "*mala inductio*" which Bacon frequently contrasts to the "*inductio vera*," in the following and similar terms : "Quæ  
" procedit per enumerationem simplicem, res  
" puerilis est; et precario concludit, et periculo  
" exponitur ab instantia contradictoria, et ple-  
" rumque secundum pauciora quam par est, et  
" ex his tantummodo quæ præsto sunt pronun-  
" ciat."\*

As to the inutility of Syllogism for every species of discovery, and the necessity of adopting Induction in its room, or, in other words, as to the truth of Lord Bacon's philosophy, any thing that I can offer must appear altogether unimportant and superfluous. At the present day it will therefore be a sufficient defence of that

\* Aph 105. *et alibi.*

position of Lord Kames, which has drawn forth a general charge of "*flippancy and falsehood*,"\* to observe, that his opinions are identically the same with those contained in that very aphorism to which our attention is so erroneously directed for a quite opposite view of the subject. The passage from Lord Kames is this, †

" That Aristotle never attempts to apply his  
 " syllogistic mode of reasoning to any subject  
 " handled by himself : That on ethics, on rhe-  
 " toric, and on poetry, he argues like a rational  
 " being, without once putting in practice any of  
 " his own rules." In this passage he certainly  
 did not mean to maintain the impossibility of  
 reducing to the syllogistic form whatever truths  
 the treatises referred to might contain ; and it  
 was quite unnecessary to inform us of the exer-  
 cise formerly in such repute, of converting the  
 propositions which occur in a page of Aristotle  
 into syllogisms ; an exercise which, if there be  
 any justice in the definition, that every sentence  
 must contain a proposition, is not more appro-

\* First Reply.

† Sketches, Vol. III.

priate to the writings of the Greek philosopher than to any other work which may exhibit a due proportion of self-evident truths. Lord Kames, as well as Lord Bacon, admitted that the ancients were in possession of useful information, but he challenged the admirers of the Scholastic Logic to trace its origin in any instance to this unfertile source. The continuation of the passage completely corresponds with the ideas of Lord Bacon. "It is not supposable  
 " that a man of his capacity should be ignorant  
 " how insufficient a *syllogism* is for discovering  
 " any latent truth. He certainly intended his  
 " System of Logic chiefly, if not solely, for dis-  
 " putation: And if such was his purpose, he  
 " has been wonderfully successful; for nothing  
 " can be better contrived for wrangling and  
 " disputing without end. He, indeed, in a man-  
 " ner professes this to be his aim in his book,  
 " *De Sophisticis Elenchis.*" Thus, in Bacon's lan-  
 " guage, " *Ad garriendum prompta, ad generan-*  
 " *dum invalida;*" &c.

I shall leave this charge of " *flippancy* and *falsehood*" against Lord Kames, as far as it is

general, to receive its refutation from a less partial quarter ; but when I find the former epithet applied even to Lord Bacon, I may be allowed to lament, in the strongest terms, the influence of inveterate prejudice, which could dictate to a mind so highly cultivated this most unsuitable of all appellations. The charge of "*flippancy*" against Bacon is founded upon the comparison of the ancient philosopher's ambition to that of his royal pupil, the justness of which has rendered it almost proverbial. Whether it was his zeal in the cause of truth that gave rise to the reproach of the Platonists, *that he trampled on the mother which produced him*, will not now be easily discovered ; but whatever exertions he might have made "to establish the empire of common sense and " reason," when they served at the same time to establish his own reputation, it is vain to dispute the justice of Dr Reid's remarks upon his want of candour, either as to the bounds of his own knowledge, or the merits of his predecessors. Of the former the author of the *Replies* himself affords the strongest confirmation, when

he admires his \* “ entire systems moulded into “ a full and *perfect* shape ; buildings planned and “ raised from their foundation by the same “ hand, and carefully *finished in all their parts* ;” a praise which no panegyrist would have offered, and which no philosopher would have claimed, who entertained just views of the human mind.

After having “ *shewn the Organum of Bacon to be confined to the department of Physical Science,*” when the author observes that “ the syllogistic method of reasoning is not once mentioned, in the first book, among the causes which seem to have obstructed the advancement of natural science,”† he can only be understood to mean, that no mention whatever of Syllogism occurs in that part of the work ; and it might be fairly questioned upon this ground, whether he had ever paid much attention to it previous to this controversy. But I am not anxious to press this conclusion, and shall content myself with observing, that (to pass over the preface) the

\* First Reply, p. 26.

† Second Reply, *ut supra.*

very second page contains four consecutive aphorisms in which Syllogism is mentioned as useless in the discovery of every species of knowledge ; from which the usual conclusion is drawn, " *Spes est una in Inductione vera.*" I trust I may now be permitted to observe, that there are some *modern* " Treatises" for the study of which " *a foreign stimulus*" \* is occasionally wanted, and upon this ground to plead for the tolerance of Bacon in the schools. Let but a fair opportunity be offered for comparing Syllogism and Induction : Where they do not interfere, no harm is done ; where they do, let them contend fairly for the preference, and Truth will be in this, as in other instances, the infallible result. In recommending this alteration, I am well aware that, independent on the technical phraseology, and the physical illustrations already mentioned, a great part of Bacon's

\* This is one of the reasons given in the first Reply for the exclusive study of the ancient moralists, " That a popular modern work in English will be read without much specific encouragement, while a foreign stimulus is almost always wanted to make an ancient treatise of any depth generally studied."

philosophical works is ill calculated for the subject of the public examinations; but without presuming to offer any remarks upon the mode of carrying the reformation into effect, this, at least, I should hope few unbiased persons will dispute, that any system of University education must be deemed faulty and incomplete, in which the Inductive method of intellectual philosophy is utterly proscribed.

To return to the statute: There seems little force in the objection, that the duties of the Examiners and Examinees are not defined with sufficient accuracy, and that it confers too much power upon the former. On the contrary, the latitude of interpretation of which it is susceptible, and the consequent facility with which it may be accommodated to the changes of manners and opinions, seem to open a way for the best of all innovations,—those which time imperceptibly, but irresistibly, operates in an age of increasing light and liberality. One of the greatest errors of the ancient system was the officious anxiety with which it regulated every minute particular that was to be spoken or to

be heard in the whole course of Academical discipline ; as if it had been possible so to simplify and controul every object of intellectual attainment, that, in the infinite diversity of human understanding, no two persons should draw from the same premisses a different conclusion. It was this unaccommodating nature of the old exercises that excluded every partial improvement ; and it was owing to the corrupted constitution of the University that they were suffered to continue so long after they were reduced to cumbersome and ludicrous ceremonies. Why should a vestige of any one of them remain, to afford a handle of abuse and misrepresentation to the enemies of all ancient institutions ?

“ *Verre pavimentum, nitidas ostende columnas,*

“ *Arida cum tota descendat aranea tela.*”

A second statute, distinct from the former, was passed on the 22d June, 1808, which substituted, in place of certain parts of the old forms, a kind of minor examination in the classics, chiefly grammatical, one Greek and

one Latin book being the minimum, together with Logic, and Euclid's Elements, and translation from English into Latin, to be gone through a year previous to the other. The Examiners may dispense with either Logic or Euclid, and are not restricted to Aristotle's Logic. In practice, however, Euclid only is ever omitted ; and I need hardly add, that Aristotle's is the only Logic known. But an opportunity is thus left for the Examiners to break through the practice. I know not why the appellation of *Responsiones in Parvissimo* has been retained to denote this exercise, unless, perhaps, for the purpose of including the members of New College, whom the vanity and great influence of their founder had exempted from all *examinations*. With the view of destroying so foolish a regulation, why might not the title of *General* or *Jurament* be bestowed on the other, or any name of an obsolete exercise to which these exemptionaries were amenable ? The usual reply to this question, that the principal examination was not substituted in place of any statutable exercise, as the minor examination was,

only removes the difficulty a single step ; for the old examination and the old school exercises being equally useless, or, if possible, the latter being the more useless of the two, why not introduce the new examination, where it would be attended with the additional advantage of abolishing a senseless privilege ? At the same time four weeks in a year have very properly been added to the minimum of Academical residence, which is thus extended to eighteen weeks ; and the practice of most of the Colleges requires a good deal more. Last of all, the most oppressive of all the ancient ceremonies, viz. the Determination of Bachelors in Lent, has been abolished, and, in its room, the reading of two Latin discourses, or, in place of one of them, the recitation of some Latin verses of their own composition, has been substituted. Of the efficiency of this last exercise I have no means of knowledge, but its susceptibility of degenerating into a useless form must be sufficiently obvious to every one acquainted with the unintelligible ceremony of a College declamation. Might it not prove a

proper encouragement, to allow no exercise to be publicly read without having been previously perused and sanctioned by one of the Ministers of the Schools, who might also be empowered to select the best, to be read on some particular day? Indeed the propriety of reading all these compositions is by no means apparent, a great proportion of which are in all probability not of a very interesting nature. This Lectio now constitutes the only exercise for the degree of Master of Arts, and is not only a great relaxation of the ancient discipline, but a wide departure from the views of those who thought a second examination necessary for this degree. The impropriety of a second public examination for young men of this standing is generally admitted, but a private examination in Natural and Moral Philosophy might produce the greatest advantages. The examination for the inferior degree might, perhaps, remain as at present, without detriment to the progress of useful knowledge, were the Logic of Bacon introduced even here, with his best commentators, as well in Moraüs as in Phy-

sics. At all events, it must appear sufficiently singular, that while the statutes of so many Colleges require the residence of their dependent members of this standing, no exercise should be required of them, except the discourses already mentioned; *not even a certificate of attendance upon any of the public lectures.* It is but a sorry apology for the omission of one important branch of University education, that there is no professor of Moral Philosophy.— English essays might be best adapted for a college-exercise for Bachelors of Arts.

At the same time with this last statute in 1808, a new edition of the former of 1807 appeared; in which, however, there seems no other variation than a clause prohibiting any candidate from being admitted without a certificate of his having performed the *responsiones in parvo*, and a line subdividing the second class, which, in fact, makes three classes, and is a very considerable improvement.

It was said above, that the examination was required of the candidates for the lowest Acade-

nnical degrees, viz. Bachelors of Arts and of Civil Law. The latter honour, however, corresponds to that of Masters of Arts, and requires a similar standing of seven years in the University. The Lent Determination, already mentioned, being peculiar to Bachelors of Arts, the students in Civil Law are not liable to the Lectio substituted in its place. No mention occurs in the late statutes of the abolition of a hereditary discussion upon *contracts*, and some other subjects, in the syllogistic form, transmitted from the dark ages in " academical entail," through the hands of many successive disputants ; a notable example of those " *perfect buildings*" for which the world is indebted to the Logic of Aristotle. The professor of Civil Law reads no lectures, notwithstanding every thing connected with Roman antiquities is so congenial to the spirit of the place. But since this inexhaustible field presents no topic of general interest, and since, even if the students in Civil Law were required to attend, they are not sufficiently numerous to constitute a class, why may not the

professor examine privately the different candidates, in Heineccius, or Sigonius, or Taylor, or even in Dr Adam's *Roman Antiquities*? These are works of which no scholar should be ignorant; and many others, not only in Civil Law, but in antiquities, and the law of nature and nations, might, with a proper liberality of interpretation, be admitted to the choice of the candidate. Even "Propria quæ maribus" would be a respectable substitute for the Syllogisms upon *contracts*, already alluded to.

Such is the public part of the system of education pursued at Oxford, as it has been *re-cast* within the last ten years; and such it will, in all probability, remain for a long period to come. Public lectures, indeed, are read, but they hardly form part of the regular system, the whole efficiency of which depends upon the operation of the new statutes as now detailed. And here I cannot omit to express a hope, that Dr Tat-ham has not forgotten the promise to continue his labours, with which he concludes the second edition of his last Address. He probably waits

for an opportunity of examining the practical effect of the statute, when he will doubtless redeem his pledge, "to make whatever comment upon it before the public he may think will serve the interests of truth, and tend to promote the advancement of science and sound learning."

The author of the Replies has clearly explained the subject matter of the examinations, and the manner in which they are carried on; but this *Historical* account of the late changes will not, I trust, appear unnecessary, when it is considered that the derision and contempt which has of late been levelled against the University, is said to have been done in ignorance of the new statutes, and to have been applicable only to the state of things previous to the recent improvements. We have already seen, that the period which, in different places, the Reviewers term "a few years," "a very few years," "four or five years," "three or four years," and, in one place, admit to be eight years, is in fact *ten*, the statute having been passed in the year 1800:—and consequently these four assertions

as to the period when the new system commenced, are alike unfounded in fact, and inconsistent with each other, and with the singular defence of ignorance.

In the review of the first Reply, three different authors are supposed to have concentrated their powers. Whether all of them have judged wisely in this particular is not for me to determine; but the union of their grounds of defence, in one article, is necessarily attended with the effect of identifying, in some measure, their responsibility, and leaving a general impression of the whole on the mind of the reader. For this reason, I am anxious to state, lest there should be any thing in these remarks of ambiguous application, that they relate chiefly to the concluding part of the article. The author of the first part is certainly entitled to this defence, that his argument related to the deficiency of great mathematical talents during the last century, and that a system of education established only ten years had scarcely time to operate. I could have wished that he had dropped a single hint concerning the prospect of future improve-

ment ; but as it is, since he does happen to have connected himself with this discussion, I cannot withhold my humble tribute of admiration, superfluous as it may well appear, from the able criticism, a part of which he here comes forward to defend, and that might have done honour even to a name with which I have been accustomed, from my earliest years, to associate every sentiment of respect and esteem.

The last of the three authors asks, “ How long has this system been established ? Has it existed four years ? And how long did that which preceded it exist ? Four years *also.*”\* The improvements, above detailed, in 1807, are probably what are here alluded to as two distinct and different systems ; but the foregoing remarks are sufficient to show, that they are the same system somewhat altered and amended ; and that his strictures are no more applicable to the statute of 1800 than to that of 1807. Much praise, therefore, is not due to the “ *candour* ” of the tardy “ *admission* ,”

\* Edinburgh Review, No. 31, p. 183.

that he was “ not *perfectly* aware of the new “ system of education ;”—an apology which might have been entitled to more attention prior to the invention of posts by Cyrus of Persia. I had almost said, prior to the publication of the First Number of the Edinburgh Review, where distinct and honourable mention is made of the new system of examinations in the following terms : “ The University of Oxford—have “ completely abolished their very ludicrous and “ disgraceful exercises for Degrees, and have “ substituted in their place, a system of exer- “ tion, and a scale of Academical honours, cal- “ culated (we are willing to hope) to produce “ the happiest effects.” But it would be too much to expect this gentleman to pore over pages of such dull morality and religion, as he might expect in the review of a sermon ; yet, if he had looked into the review of Dr Parr’s Spital Sermon, he might have found some ef- fusions to relieve the natural heaviness of such subjects, not unlike the exuberance of his own fancy in its better days. The new system is, however, admitted to have been *somewha*.

known ; though no hint escaped him *previous to the publication of the Reply*, of this dark and doubtful rumour which had shot across the vast abyss between Oxford and Edinburgh. How is it that no means occurred of investigating the strange report, that something was doing at Oxford, during the whole ten years of its subsistence ? Have none of our southern neighbours, who annually migrate to the north, been able to answer his eager enquiries concerning a subject which interested him so much ? The Sons of Oxford, who have of late been induced to compare the advantages of the most opposite systems of education, have not *all* been driven from the alma mater of their ancestors, by the awkward circumstance of a public examination, to take shelter in the promiscuous crowd of a northern lecture-room. They have not all been attracted by the well-earned fame of the Scottish professors, to desert those seats of learning, and, I must still venture to add, of science, which have been envied and admired by all Europe for centuries, and which occasionally

draw forth the *respect* even of those who are least disposed to bestow it, before they have had an opportunity of witnessing the operation and effects of the new system of Academical discipline. It is strange, that while these authors can set at defiance the anti-commercial decrees of Buonaparte, and present their readers with such ingenious and interesting pictures of foreign literature ; that while Paris, and Petersburgh, and Turkey, the East and West Indies, and the whole continent of America, are open to their researches, their supplies of information from the west of England should be so miserably scanty, that ten long years shall elapse before they are “ *perfectly aware*” that a new System of Education is established at Oxford. Accordingly, when we are reminded of “ the as-“ tonishment of the waiter, that the passenger, “ who complained of the roughness and dark-“ ness of the town, should not know that a bill “ had just passed for paving and lighting it,” \* however witty the anecdote, (for I speak with

\* Page 184.

much deference to the acknowledged talents of the writer in his own peculiar department), the application at least is difficult. Had the streets of this anonymous town been actually paved and lighted for ten years, without attracting the notice of the traveller, the case would have been parallel; but would not have suited a writer for whom plain matters of fact possess no attractions. For these and other reasons, until I shall be entertained by more than one "periodical evacuation" of this author's jest-book, and this, too, a little more to the purpose than that to which I have just alluded, I intend to substitute for "*not perfectly aware*," "*nescire paratus*." And, in the mean time, I will venture to assert, that a more whimsical view of any subject was never taken by any author than this, to write page after page upon the present state of Oxford, in the present tense, and not only to expect the reader to apply it all to the past, without any previous warning of so strange a departure from the common use of speech, but to treat, as an absolute absurdity, any other interpretation of his words.

As to the epithet *northern*, which has given rise to so much offence, it really appears to me a very harmless appellation. It may possibly include, in the conception of some persons, that portion of ridicule which men ignorant of the world are apt to attach to those of different countries, or of different habits and professions ; but I can assure these authors, that, in the pure Oxonian acceptation of the word, no small respect is generally included for the intellectual attainments of a people, to whom, through the united influence of poverty, local institutions, and hereditary qualities of mind, their southern neighbours are so well accustomed to yield the prize in the great contest for riches and fame.

The minute points of criticism to which this controversy has given rise, do not fall within my plan ; nor do I feel the smallest inclination to comment on the “ Babel of savage sounds” with which the *λεπτατων ληρων ΙΕΡΕΥΣ*,\* who concludes the last attack has endeavoured to compensate for his deficiency in argument.—

\* Aristoph. Nub.

When this author still continues to assert, that classical erudition is the *sole occupation* at Oxford, and to declaim upon the importance of cultivating other branches of knowledge, and this while reviewing the very work which gives an account of the mathematical and other studies pursued in that University,\* it is obvious that he writes only for those whose leisure or inclination may not lead them to investigate the other side of the question, and whose previous knowledge of the subject may not enable them to detect the spirit of misrepresentation which

\* I own I cannot attach much importance to the controversy concerning the acceptation of the comparative term, *Elements* of Mathematics. As there are no public examinations at Edinburgh, I have nothing to state as to the only point of any consequence, the challenged comparison in mathematical attainments, except my own belief that it is a very rash defiance on the part of the Reviewers.—I omitted to observe above, that it is most erroneous to boast of the numbers attending the lectures at Edinburgh as greatly exceeding those of the students at Oxford; since, if the comparison were fairly made, the former would not be found equal to one half of the latter. The Edinburgh classes of the two first years ought not to be calculated, as at that age boys are at school in England, and far less the students in Medicine and Scotch Law.

pervades all he has written. And who would wish to deprive him of any applause which he may derive from such a quarter?—On one point, however, he must be admitted to be sincere ; where he states, that “ he neither knows “ nor cares whether he is or is not considered “ as a superficial person *by competent judges* :”\* —a manly avowal, which deserves approbation from its consistency with his usual contempt for whatever the world are accustomed to regard with respect and veneration. Yet even this avowal, to deal frankly with him, I feel it difficult to reconcile with the vexation which his ill-timed mirth is so awkwardly officious to conceal, at the chastisement inflicted by the author of the *Replies*, with so just a forgetfulness of mercy.

He has revived, not without considerable pretensions to novelty, Rousseau’s declamations about the study of Latin and Greek ; withdrawing the attention “ from things to words.” “ If,” says he, “ a man reads a book in a dif-

\* Page 186.

"ficult language, copious in its words, and  
 "licentious in its variations, it is not possible  
 "he should attend as much to the meaning of  
 "what he reads, as if that meaning were con-  
 "veyed to him in his own native tongue."—  
 First of all, it may be observed, that the best  
 examples of the very opposite to every thing  
 that is copious and licentious are to be found  
 among the ancient writers. Aristotle's style, in  
 particular, is altogether unrivalled for conciseness  
 and accuracy of expression. But I deny  
 the general position, that what is most easily  
 read is best remembered. On the contrary, the  
 most susceptible memory is generally the least  
 tenacious; for this very reason, that a smaller  
 exertion of attention being necessary, the im-  
 pression is originally slighter, and is more easily  
 effaced. If a difficulty occurs about the mean-  
 ing of a passage, is not this, of all others, what  
 we recollect the best? Thus it is that an anci-  
 ent writer remarks, with perfect justice, "Quæ  
 "legentem fefellissent, transferentem fugere non  
 "possunt."\* But the fact, that what is care-

\* Plin. Ep. VII. 9.

lessly hurried over in English cannot be remembered half so well as what we must read with painful attention in Greek, seems a principle too plain to admit of illustration. In truth, the general diffusion of knowledge, and the ease with which it is acquired, is, amidst many advantages, attended with this evil, that books are referred to rather than read, or at best read in such a hasty and careless manner, that their contents leave but a general and confused impression on the memory. Books are every day most unnecessarily multiplied, either from motives of vanity or profit, or simply because the authors have not read, or do not understand, the writings of those who have gone before them ; and even, by the number of useful books which the facility of printing occasions, the heads of every art and science are to be found so concentrated and compressed, that the curiosity is prematurely satisfied, and the interest with which they are studied much diminished. For the ardour which attends any pursuit is most unquestionably damped by destroying the ne-

cessity of exertion ; and most of all, those pursuits, the principal inducement to which is the gratification of the desire of knowledge. Now, the difficulties of a dead language are precisely that drag-chain on the wheels of learning, which this great and increasing evil of modern education seems to require. If it were possible to separate altogether the actual possession of knowledge from the labour of acquiring it, the value would be inconceivably diminished, from the absence of the habits necessary for its useful application. Those who are already in possession of the end, cannot be expected to exert the means for obtaining it ; nor are those likely to enlarge the bounds of science, who are content to grasp the fruits of other men's labours, and seize their discoveries, without learning the arts by which they were matured. If philosophy be made to shine suddenly on the tender mind with too bright a lustre, the faculties will at first be dazzled rather than enlightened, and there will be a danger of a similar indifference succeeding to that with which ignorant

and barbarous men are accustomed to behold the beauties of the material world. Young men, who are really desirous to be wiser and better for what they read, and to learn to think rightly and sensibly upon the most important subjects, must subdue every unreasonable desire of novelty, and, relinquishing the vain applause of all that is witty and superficial, assiduously labour to trace the steps by which their predecessors advanced on the road of useful discovery, while their affections are stedfastly fixed on the ultimate object of all education, *χαιρειν καὶ λυπεισθαι εἰς δεῖ.*

It has been shewn above, that, with one exception, the study of the ancient writers, as pursued at Oxford, is not exclusive of other branches of knowledge; and there is no force in the objection, that it forms the principal pursuit. On the contrary, there are many great and important advantages in preserving, to the different seats of learning, the peculiar genius and distinctive character of each. The number of persons is probably very limited upon whom

nature bestows a bias for any particular object of science ; but wherever such an instance may occur, it is highly proper that an opening should be left for it. Yet, as it is plain that no man deserves the name of a scholar who does not know something of Greek and Latin, even he whom the impulse of genius, real or imagined, prompts to other objects, has no reason to complain that he cannot obtain an Academical degree without some knowledge of the ancient languages. Now, although these languages cannot be effectually acquired without the devotion of a long period of time to this object, it still remains to be shewn what exercise is more salutary to the youthful mind. Leaving to its fate the absurdity of the statement, that an ancient language can be studied without studying the substance of the works in which it is contained, and that the meaning of ancient authors may be correctly explained without being understood,—is there no advantage in the accurate habits of attention and memory and judgment, which such an occupation requires ? Or rather, I would ask, is

there any better mode of uniting the cultivation of all these powers with the formation of the taste and fancy, on the purest models of excellence? Or any better discipline, by which the faculties may be matured for the more important researches of philosophy?

We are told of the time that is mis-spent in studying the structure of Greek verse, and getting the poets by heart; while the orators, historians, and philosophers, are overlooked and forgotten: but wherever such things occur it is not at Oxford. The structure of Greek verse is undoubtedly one of the most intricate subjects which can engage the attention of a scholar; and for this reason those who have devoted their time to classical studies, have naturally been most anxious to unravel and explain what was least understood by those who went before them: But no attempt was ever made to introduce such a subject in the schools. The composition of Latin verse is, indeed, encouraged by an annual prize; but, as no one is compelled to write for it, such a practice cannot be considered as very dangerous or alarming. Upon

the whole, the prose authors have, at least, their share of honour ; nor is it likely that any one, who has taken the trouble to attend the public examinations, will accuse the present race of under-graduates of any very preposterous and unnatural abhorrence of false quantities. There are some persons who can discover no other advantage in prosody than a little additional pleasure in reading poetry ; and, in truth, the genius of the French and English languages is in this respect so different from those of ancient Greece and Rome, that it is not easy to explain to one, who possesses but a slight acquaintance with the latter, why the meanest of the ignorant and beastly mob of Athens would have hissed an actor for mispronouncing a word, while in his own country he has been accustomed to consider an accurate attention to pronunciation and prosody, as among the refinements of the higher and more learned orders, the mere offspring of arbitrary custom, which is daily changed without the smallest inconvenience. At all events, it seems an experiment of very doubtful advantage, which learned men

have of late been so imperiously called upon to make, in the devotion of that time which is now occupied even with the less important parts of classical learning, to the translation of the Greek and Latin philosophers. Some of the best of such attempts which have hitherto been made, the fruits of much labour and learning, serve but to propagate imperfect and erroneous views of the author's meaning, and prevent many persons from having recourse to the original ; and thus, while they are of little benefit to the scholar, are worse than useless to the ignorant. It is melancholy to see the heads of Aristotle's Lectures converted into a " *plena ac numerosa oratio*," and to hear that accurate, concise, and energetic philosopher made to deliver, in vague and flowing periods, sentiments not always consistent with an earlier age than the restoration of learning.\*

With those who deny all merit to classical studies, I do not presume to argue. It is not easy to explain colours to the blind. To de-

\* On the subject of translation some excellent remarks occur in the first Reply, p. 113.

termine also the relative utility of different objects of knowledge, is extremely difficult, if not impossible: but it is generally admitted, that the ancient languages ought to form a distinguished branch of liberal education.—Now, why should there not be one place in the world particularly famous for Classical studies?—And why should not that same *genius loci*, or *esprit de corps*, from which so many important effects are often found to follow, be allowed to operate at Oxford, in favour of classical learning, with the same impunity with which it has been permitted to perpetuate the fame of Cambridge for Mathematics, and of Edinburgh for Medical Science?

The author of the Replies has ably argued the superior excellence of Classical studies to every other preparatory discipline, which, without teaching a man the peculiar business of any one office or calling, enriches and ennobles all his future employments, and bestows a better grace and more elevated carriage on every occupation to which his talents may chance to be directed. He exposes the absurdity of continu-

ally asking of what direct utility each particular branch of knowledge is to the individual ; and thinks it sufficient to reply, that any study forms a part, however small, of that complete circle of generous education, which imparts a dignity to every profession in life. He contends, with the eloquence and enthusiasm of a scholar, that the precious remains of Grecian and Roman genius will be held more and more sacred, while genius, and taste, and learning, shall be valued among men ; and that, as the human mind is the same in every age, nothing can make eloquence “ less powerful, poetry less charming, historical example less forcible, or “ moral and political reflections less instructive.”

I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of concluding these remarks by quoting, at length, the following passage :—\*

“ Never, while the world lasts, will it be “ wholly disabused of that specious error, that “ the more there is crammed into a young

\* First Reply, p. 175.

“ man's mind, whether it stays there or not,  
“ whether it is digested or not,—still the wiser he  
“ is. And writings, such as those which I have  
“ been examining, smart, witty, and confident,  
“ tend to confirm this diseased habit of think-  
“ ing, and to spread the contagion. A half-  
“ educated father hears that lectures are read in  
“ Chemistry, Botany, Mineralogy, &c. &c. at  
“ one place, and his son is learning nothing of  
“ this sort at school. Incapable of judging how  
“ mental powers are improved by continual ex-  
“ ercise, and how the moral character is, in a  
“ great measure, formed by the study of good  
“ authors, he fancies that when the grammar  
“ of a language is learnt, all farther attention to  
“ that language is lost time ;—that there is no  
“ thing more gained, because there is no new  
“ name. If the boy is captivated by the no-  
“ velty and variety of the studies which are pre-  
“ sented to him, he seldom returns with any  
“ relish to philological pursuits. He may be-  
“ come a skilful agriculturist, an improver of  
“ manufactures, a useful inspector of roads,  
“ mines, and canals : but all that distinguishing

“ grace which a liberal education imparts, he foregoes for ever. It cannot be acquired in a later period of life, if the morning of his days have been occupied with other cares, and the intellectual habits already settled in different forms and postures. If, as too often happens, these matters are received into the ears, but take no possession of the mind, there is not only a moral blank, but an intellectual barrenness,—a poverty of fancy and invention,—a dearth of historical and poetical illustration,—a want of all those ideas which decorate and enliven truth, which enable us to live over again the times that are past, and to combine the produce of widely-distant ages.”

The peculiar importance of classical learning to the English clergy, to whose profession in general the Reviewer has extended his charge against college tutors, of hostility to every liberal and useful acquirement, would of itself justify any preference it might obtain, not altogether exclusive of other branches of knowledge, in a system of education of which they are to derive the chief advantage. If it be

at all desirable, that the ministers of religion should be respected, and should respect themselves, for the learning peculiar to their profession, this must be admitted as a strong argument against a radical change in the favourite pursuits of Oxford. This ground of defence, indeed, is obvious, and has been frequently urged with much ability. I shall not therefore attempt, by any thing which I might add on this subject, to silence the unprincipled clamour for the total subversion of a system venerable for its tried utility.—On some occasions it may, perhaps, be rash to attribute to the writer, to whom I have just alluded, any meaning at all; but if his abhorrence of the University of Oxford, and his contempt for the character and pursuits of the English clergy, have any foundation in consistency or truth, it will be difficult for persons of different views to reconcile his revolutionary dogmas on these subjects, with his attachment to certain principles of the British constitution, which they have been accustomed to consider as deriving from this quarter a valuable support. To such persons it may

not appear the less important to preserve the sacred union of the Universities and the Church with the Monarchy and Aristocracy of England; that those who, on some points, give vent to open calumny and undistinguishing abuse, should on other occasions show some small deference to public feeling, in a formal profession of faith, or vague avowal of abstract attachment and metaphysical loyalty.

On the whole, every impartial person, who reads both sides of the question, must feel considerably indebted to the Edinburgh Reviewers, for having contributed, by the agitation of the subject, to bring into more general notice the Oxford "system of exertion, and scale of Academic honours, calculated (as they themselves observed, when it suited their argument), to produce the happiest effects;" and for establishing, on a more permanent basis than ever, the reputation of that University as a place of general education. Whether their motives have been always praiseworthy, and whether they have, in any instance, rolled a stone which has recoiled on their own heads, is of more im-

portance to themselves than to the public. The good effects of their exertions will continue to be felt, long after the causes that produced them shall have ceased to operate.

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**F I N I S.**

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## CORRIGENDA.

Page 22. note l. 13. for *twenty-eight* read *twenty-seven*.

23. l. 4. *et seq.* read—that it is strongly marked by the prejudices of the author's professional habits.

73. l. 20. for  $\lambda\alpha\tau\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\omega\lambda\eta\rho\omega\eta$  'IEPETΣ. read,  $\lambda\alpha\tau\tau\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\omega\lambda\eta\rho\omega\eta$  'IEPETΣ.

79. l. 13. for  $\eta\eta\eta$  read 'οις.

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